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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

REPORT

CD NO.

COUNTRY

East Germany

DATE DISTR. 21 March 1955
25X1

SUBJECT

Development of Myco-Wood in East
Germany

NO. OF PAGES 2

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ACQUIREDNO. OF ENCLS. 25X1
(LISTED BELOW)DATE OF
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1. Since 1949, a development project for the making of so-called myco-wood has been carried out in East Germany. Myco-wood is ordinary wood, usually beech, the structure of which is weakened mycologically with the aid of fungi. The fungi grow at the expense of certain pentoses and hexoses within the wood and change its structure so that it becomes softer. Myco-wood can be used for all purposes where soft wood is required and for which ordinary wood is not serviceable. The research project has been carried out by Walter Luthardt, head of Department Myco-Wood in VEB Schiefergruben in Steinach, Thuringia. The project was sponsored by the Central Office for Research and Technology (Zentralamt fuer Forschung und Technik - ZAFT) of the East German State Planning Commission which has made funds amounting to between 200,000 and 300,000 DME available since 1949. The project has been under the supervision of Dr. Heinrich Haerdtel, head of the ZAFT Department for Agricultural Sciences. In 1954, ZAFT considerably decreased the funds for Luthardt because Haerdtel became an adversary of the project, mainly caused by his lack of confidence in Luthardt's abilities and the extended period during which the project had been in progress. Haerdtel furthermore cut off all funds for Luthardt's project in 1955.

2. Luthardt thereupon complained to the Central Committee of the SED. On 14 January 1955, the Central Committee called the following persons for a conference on the matter:

- a. Dr. Alfred Baumbach, head of ZAFT Main Department II
- b. Dr. Guenther Panning, head of ZAFT Department for Chemical Industry
- c. Dr. Haerdtel
- d. Koenitzer (fnu), head of the Main Administration for Wood in the Ministry for Light Industry.
- e. Leonhardt (fnu) deputy head of the named Main Administration.
- f. Luthardt

In this conference, representatives of the Central Committee pointed out that any project aiming at relieving the shortage of quality wood in East Germany was of utmost importance and that such a project should not be called off for the reasons previously pointed out by Dr. Haerdtel.

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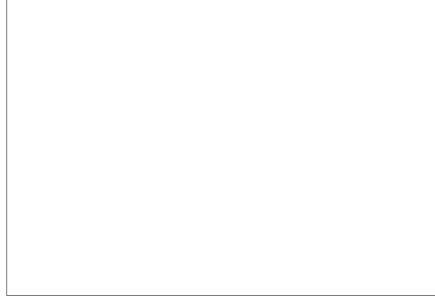
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As a result of this conference, the Central Committee ordered ZAPT to make funds available for a continuation of the project in 1955. In addition, the Central Committee, upon Luthardt's request, approved expenditure of an additional 150,000 DM for the installation of fungus-breeding chambers to be used in the project.

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